

Movie review/synopsis: *Apollo 13*

Rating: PG

Year of release: 1995

Time: 140 minutes

Cast: Tom Hanks, Kevin Bacon, Bill Paxton, Gary Sinise, Ed Harris, Kathleen Quinlan

Links: Video Quiz-Apollo 13

Synopsis/review: At first, it seemed the perfect mission--too perfect, even, to make headlines. After three days in space, three Apollo astronauts--Jim Lovell (two- time Academy Award winner Tom Hanks), Fred Haise (Bill Paxton) and Jack Swigert (Kevin Bacon)--were finally approaching a long-cherished destination. Apollo 13 was going to the Moon.

Back in Houston, astronaut Ken Mattingly (Gary Sinise) considered himself the unluckiest man on earth. Two days before launch, he'd been grounded from Apollo 13 for medical reasons. And so Mattingly was in Mission Control when Jim Lovell intoned a simple, heart-stopping message across the void of space:

"Houston...we've got a problem."

Something had gone horribly wrong. Power and guidance systems were down-- and the supply of oxygen was rapidly dwindling. Lovell, Haise and Swigert now faced a grim reality--that their crippled capsule, stranded 205,000 miles in space, might never return to earth.

With time running out, the crew and thousands of others braved near- impossible odds in a daring attempt to guide the capsule earthward. For three days, the world watched in rapt silence--not knowing until the last, anxious moment whether the men of Apollo 13 would come home alive.

Ed Harris (The Abyss, Glengarry Glen Ross) co-stars as flight director Gene Kranz in Apollo 13, directed by Ron Howard (Backdraft, The Paper) and produced by Brian Grazer (Backdraft, The Paper) through Imagine Films. The screenplay is by William Broyles, Jr. & Al Reinert, based on the book by Jim Lovell and Jeffrey Kluger, Lost Moon.

See "Apollo 13 Video Quiz."